THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

MANAGER'S REPORT

DATE ISSUED June 5, 2003 REPORT NO. 03-123

ATTENTION: Natural Resources and Culture Committee
Agenda of June 11, 2003

SUBJECT: Mission Bay Landfill Site Assessment

SUMMARY

Issue – Should the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with SCS Engineers for professional services to prepare and implement a site assessment of the closed Mission Bay Landfill and appropriate funds for such work from the Refuse Disposal Enterprise Fund?

Manager's Recommendations - Authorize the City Manager to execute an Agreement with SCS Engineers to perform the Mission Bay Landfill Site Assessment and appropriate funds for this work from the Refuse Disposal Enterprise Fund.

Other Recommendations- none

Fiscal Impact - All funds are from the Refuse Disposal Enterprise Fund. The project cost is $600,000, of which $500,000 is for professional services. Up to $95,000 of the $500,000 professional services will be awarded in FY03, to complete Phase 1 of the project (preparation of an Assessment Plan). The remaining $405,000 of professional services will be awarded for Phase 2 (implementation of the Assessment Plan) upon approval of the FY04 CIP budget.

BACKGROUND

It is proposed to conduct a site assessment of the closed Mission Bay Landfill to address community concerns regarding whether or not this site contains hazardous wastes and the potential for materials in the site impacting human health and/or the environment.

The Mission Bay Landfill was operated by the City of San Diego from 1952-1959. It utilized a trench fill method of disposal where trenches were excavated to a depth of 8 - 12 feet below the ground surface. Waste was placed in the trenches which were backfilled with clean cover material. The landfill accepted municipal solid waste as well as liquid waste from industrial sources which was legal and a common practice at the time. Under current regulations, those liquid wastes would be considered hazardous waste and required to be disposed of at a Class I facility.

After the closure of the landfill, additional dredged material from Mission Bay was placed on the site until 1962. In 1980, more dredged material was placed on the site to increase the thickness of cover material to approximately 15 feet above the original surface of the disposal area. The approximate limits of the landfill area are bounded on the West by Sea World's east parking lot, on the South by the San Diego River, on the East by Interstate Highway 5, and on the North by the boat launching ramp. The 120 acre landfill is within the "South Shores" area of Mission Bay Park.

DISCUSSION

In 1983, the area was considered for hotel development and an extensive site evaluation was undertaken by Woodward Clyde at the City's direction. The evaluation of the site included the installation of 16 groundwater wells within the waste limits of the landfill and four wells adjacent to the landfill. A comprehensive sampling protocol was undertaken to test for the presence of a variety of substances including metals, pesticides, volatile and semivolatile organics, acids and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's). While samples were found to contain heavy metals, volatile and semivolatile organic compounds and chlorinated pesticides, no PCB's or cyanide were detected in the groundwater.

Following the Woodward Clyde report, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) issued a Board Order in 1985 for the Mission Bay Landfill. The Order required the sampling of sediments, surface waters and groundwater at various points and frequencies in Mission Bay and the San Diego River adjacent to the landfill site to detect any impacts to those waters from the landfill.

This testing protocol remained in place for many years with occasional modifications made with the full approval of all relevant regulatory agencies. In 1993, the City added additional wells at the request of the RWQCB to ensure representative groundwater data could be collected. In 1996, sediment testing was eliminated based on findings by a consultant that the existing sampling protocol indicated no release of metals from the landfill and that further testing would not significantly contribute to knowledge of potential impacts related to the landfill. The report further indicated that surface and groundwater sampling would be more likely to detect a release from the landfill should

one occur. Groundwater and surface water testing continues today with annual and semi-annual reports submitted to the RWQCB in compliance with the most recent Board Order covering this landfill site.

In the early 1990's, the site was considered for inclusion in the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA's) Superfund National Priorities list. After further evaluation by the USEPA, it was determined that the site did not qualify for inclusion on the list.

Several local citizen groups have raised concerns over whether the site poses a threat to the public and the environment. In response, the Environmental Services Department (ESD) approached Councilmember Frye with the concept of creating a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to meet monthly to identify and explore issues concerning the landfill. The TAC, co-chaired by Councilmembers Frye and Zucchet, has approved a scope of work for a study of the site to specifically address concerns raised by the public.

The scope of work outlined in the proposed Agreement includes:

- Determine the horizontal and vertical extent of the historical boundaries of the Mission Bay Landfill to determine where Contaminants of Potential Concern (COPC) may have been disposed;
- Determine/identify the average and maximum concentrations of any chemical contaminants and distribution within the boundaries of the Mission Bay Landfill to determine COPC;
- Compile and compare previous analytical results to ensure that all COPC are included in any health risk assessment;
- Determine the fate and transport of COPC that may have been disposed of during the active life of the Mission Bay Landfill;
- Determine any potential ecologic or human health impact(s) of the COPC by exposure to the soil, sediments, groundwater, surrounding surface water, or air;
- Evaluate any potential ecological or human health impact(s) to determine if remediation is warranted; and
- Present potential remediation alternative methods if warranted.

In October, 2002, a Request For Proposals was advertised in several newspapers for the approved scope of work. Twelve proposals were received and the City's Consultant Nominating Committee short-listed six firms for interview. A consultant interview committee consisting of City staff and TAC members ranked SCS Engineers as the most qualified consultant.

Upon execution of the agreement with SCS Engineers, a Phase One Plan describing in detail the site assessment work will be prepared with review and input from the TAC.

This is expected to take up to four months. Upon acceptance of the Phase One Plan and execution of the Phase Two portion of the consultant's agreement by the City Manager, the site assessment will be conducted and a final assessment report delivered to the City for consideration of further steps if needed. This Phase Two work leading to the final report is expected to take up to eight months.

ALTERNATIVE

Do not authorize the agreement with SCS Engineers to conduct the Mission Bay Landfill Site Assessment. If this alternative is selected, it is anticipated that there will be ongoing unresolved community concerns about human health and environmental impacts at this site.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard L. Hays	Approved: George I. Loveland
Environmental Services Director	Senior Deputy City Manager

HAYS/FONTANA/RAP